



RIDOT

REPORT *Building on Success*
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Cover Photos: (Left to right) Bike Safety Day; Construction Career Day; the Blackstone River Valley Bike Path; the Bull Gates at Colt State Park

Building on Success: Making Rhode Island's Transportation System Safer and Better

William D. Ankner, Ph.D. Director Rhode Island Department of Transportation

William D. Ankner, Ph.D., came to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) in December 1996.

Since he became Director, Dr. Ankner has been committed to building upon the Department's success, while making our state's transportation system safer and better.

Ankner has focused RIDOT's efforts on the management and preservation of our state's transportation system; the safety of the public; and the recognition that we are part of the community.

Through the implementation of Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Almond's "Fix it First" philosophy, the Department has focused its efforts on fixing the transportation system first before undertaking new projects.

Through RIDOT's aggressive pavement management program, the interstate highway system has shown vast improvements. In 1994, 39 percent of the system was in poor condition. In 1998, 21 percent was in poor condition. In 2001, 0 percent of our interstate highway system was in poor condition.



William D. Ankner, Ph.D. has led RIDOT as Director since December of 1996, when Governor Lincoln Almond chose him to fill that role.

Ankner has also recognized that transportation plays a major role in economic development. Two projects that highlight this relationship are the Relocation of I-195 in Providence; and the Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport.

Both projects reflect how underutilized property can enhance economic growth not only for the cities in which they are located, but for the State of Rhode Island as well.

RIDOT has also been committed to ensuring the success of the state's bike and pedestrian path network, stressing its importance within the state's overall transportation system. This includes an emphasis on intermodalism to develop a transportation system that works by providing the necessary infrastructure for the connection between air, transit, and rail.

Another accomplishment has been RIDOT's lead role for the administration of the state's enhancement program. Fathered by the late Senator John Chafee, the enhancement program focuses its efforts on non-traditional, quality of life transportation projects such as those that improve the environment, preserve historic resources, and beautify the landscape.

Thanks to the efforts of its highway safety partners such as the Rhode Island Governor's Office on Highway Safety (GOHS) and the Rhode Island Traffic Safety Coalition, which Ankner founded, RIDOT has enjoyed much legislative success over the past several years, including stiffer penalties for drunk drivers, and a children's helmet law for those who use bikes, scooters, and in-line skates. ■

Building our Future

Economic Development

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) recognizes that a safe and efficient transportation system is vital to a strong Rhode Island economy.

Our participation with the Freight Rail Improvement Project to accommodate AMTRAK's high speed rail, and our construction of Route 403 in North Kingstown, are helping current and future economic growth at the Quonset/Davisville Port and Commerce Park.

Another project that will enhance economic development is RIDOT's Relocation of Interstate 195 (I-195). I-195 presently divides the city of Providence as it moves across the Providence River. The highway's original construction segregated the city and isolated the Jewelry District. The tremendous increase in traffic volumes and the "S" curve configuration of I-195, as well as the need for improved shoring, have raised significant safety issues.

Therefore, the state of Rhode Island has initiated the straightening and relocation of this highway. RIDOT's new design will move I-195 to a location south of the business and jewelry districts.

Once the new highway is in place, the removal of the previous highway alignment will provide nearly 35 acres of newly developable property adjacent to the city of Providence's business district, thereby enhancing the city's and state's overall economic development outlook.

Minority Outreach

RIDOT's federally funded construction program has had a significant impact on developing and maintaining a skilled work force. This includes a commitment to working with minority firms and developing strategies to bring underutilized firms into our program. Our goal is to have an equitable balance of minority participation in our Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) programs while building our future work force by incorporating the talents of these workers into our industry.

To help address this issue, RIDOT created the Emerging Business Resource Center in



RIDOT's Emerging Business Resource Center in Providence.

Providence. Officially opened in May 2001, the Center offers technical and educational support programs that help us build a foundation for sustainable commitment and growth within the minority community.

To bring this community into the transportation industry, the Center reflects the advancement for minorities in the transportation industry and will serve as our urban education campus. Resources offered include the business shadowing program; contract financing through a minority lender; and the emerging business equipment purchase program. Pooling our resources with our transportation partners, such as the University of Rhode Island, and the professional highway/transportation contracting industry, we are working to have better representation by minority firms and firms of color within the transportation business. ■

Education and Advancement

Aside from the hands-on skills students learn at the Department's annual Construction Career Day, RIDOT's educational approach starts with the TRAC (Transportation Research Activities Center) program that has been integrated into the math, social studies, and science classrooms of Rhode Island middle schools and high schools. Originally designed to stimulate an interest in transportation engineering, the program is also geared to encourage minority and female students to seek careers in transportation engineering, planning, management, and logistics.



Students receive hands-on training at Construction Career Day.

TRAC offers a package of materials, computers, and other resources that provide students with fun activities while they learn basic engineering skills such as sound, speed, motion and force. Structural skills are also addressed in a very successful annual bridge building activity. In the near future, RIDOT hopes to expand the program into other modes of transportation such as urban planning, marine transportation and management.

RIDOT hopes to collaborate with the Providence-based Times2 Charter School to make it a TRAC Transportation Academy; that is one that would offer a full-time curriculum on transportation technology.

Times2 is a middle and high school, comprised primarily of minority students, that is geared towards math, science, and technology. With faculty support, the TRAC activities would include highway safety, planning, business management, logistics, and more.

From there, RIDOT is branching out to higher education by exploring the possibility of having its industry partners bring their resources directly into the classrooms. RIDOT will offer a scholarship fund to get kids interested in the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center (URITC.)

Established in 1998, the URITC is a Center for Excellence in the areas of research, technical and business development, continuing education, technology transfer, and intelligent transportation systems.

Since enrollments in the business, transportation, and engineering fields are down at URI, the University and RIDOT are working together to improve enrollments and develop the "new transportation professional." RIDOT looks to the TRAC program and to our summer interns, half of which come from URI, as tools to help achieve its goals.

RIDOT plants to integrate engineering and business to develop an undergraduate degree at URI in transportation management that would include studies on finance, accounting, marketing, interpersonal development, media interaction, and transportation logistics.

In addition to funding two faculty members for the College of Engineering for transportation engineering, RIDOT is also committed to funding another position in transportation management with the URI College of Business. RIDOT will also explore a position in transportation planning. These URI professors would serve as role models for students at Times2 and others involved in the TRAC program. ■

Preserving our History

Historic Restoration

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is dedicated to the preservation of Rhode Island's past. This includes the restoration and preservation of the state's 78 historic bridges. This is defined as those bridges that are deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the 70 bridges that are potentially eligible for this distinction.

Two such bridges that recently underwent historically-compatible rehabilitation are the Manton Village Bridge that connects Providence and Johnston, and the Joseph A. Russo Memorial Bridge/Ashton Viaduct that connects Cumberland and Lincoln.

Spanning the Woonasquatucket River, the Manton Village Bridge, one of the earliest steel bridges in Rhode Island, was originally completed in 1890 and replaced in 2001. It carries Manton Avenue over the river at the Providence/Johnston line. This bridge will be an important link to the Woonasquatucket Greenway, a recreational facility/park, complete with a bicycle and pedestrian path, that is being built to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Woonasquatucket River.

The Ashton Viaduct, formerly known as the Joseph A. Russo Memorial Bridge, connects Cumberland and Lincoln on Route 116. Completed in 1945, the bridge was rehabilitated in 2000. Spanning the Blackstone River, the Blackstone Canal, and the Providence and Worcester Railroad, this bridge represents one of the state's largest engineering projects.



The Woonsocket Depot will house the Archaeological Research Collections Center (ARCC.)

Archaeological Research Collections Center (ARCC)

Under state and federal mandates, state transportation departments are required to conduct archaeological surveys as part of the environmental permitting process for highway and bridge projects.

The departments are also responsible for the permanent care and conservation of such collections in accordance with state and federal requirements. Since 1974, as a courtesy, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and several of our archaeological consultants have been storing these items for RIDOT. To date, neither group is able to accept the artifacts due to space limitations.

RIDOT is in the process of establishing an Archaeological Research Collections Center (ARCC) in Woonsocket to be housed at the Woonsocket Depot. It is currently home for the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission.

The Depot's basement will be renovated to provide a suitable, secure, climate-controlled depository for the artifacts collected from over 160 archaeological surveys conducted for RIDOT highway and bridge projects. The collections consist of thousands of items and include such diverse remains as arrowheads, stone knives and shell remains from a 5,000 year old Native American village, to machine-cut nails, steel files and coal fragments from a 19th century Afro-American blacksmith shop site.

The Woonsocket Depot renovation will help RIDOT fulfill its state and federal obligations, and at the same time, will serve to maintain and preserve the state's cultural resources. ■

Beautifying our Roadways

Maintenance

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) takes pride in the quality of our roadways and believes that transportation systems do not have to be ugly scars that divide highways. Starting in 1996, RIDOT launched a multi-year effort to be a better neighbor and improve the aesthetic quality of our roadways.

RIDOT's Division of Maintenance plays an integral role in this effort by keeping our roads and bridges clean, since it is responsible for the routine maintenance of approximately 1,079 miles of state highways and 858 bridges. Methods for aiding in this beautification program include sweeping, brush cutting, mowing, cleaning, and picking up litter. In 2001 alone, Maintenance crews mowed 2,187.8 miles of roadsides and removed 3,208.7 miles of litter from our state's roadways.

Gateway Project

Further exemplifying the importance of improving our roadways, RIDOT began a highway beautification project several years ago to upgrade the visual character of the freeway system, starting with the I-95 North corridor in Cranston.

Termed "The Gateway Project" this undertaking was originally designed to provide a "gateway" or connection from T.F. Green Airport in Warwick to the city of Providence. When airport visitors first entered Rhode Island, originally all they saw were gravel slopes with weeds. Today, thanks to "The Gateway Project" they are now greeted by a series of graduated retaining walls and ornamental plantings that guide them towards the state's capital city.



*RIDOT's highway beautification efforts
xfeature the addition of wildflowers
along the state's roadways.*

Bluebird House Project

Another RIDOT beautification project, located on Route 4 South in North Kingstown, focuses on bluebirds and butterflies.

In the Spring and Fall of 2001, the Environmental Unit of RIDOT's Maintenance Division created an environmental corridor by erecting 44 bluebird houses, and planting nearly three acres of native and non-invasive species of wildflower seeds.

With help from the Rhode Island Audubon Society, the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society, and the Carpentry Shop at the Department of Corrections Adult Correctional Institution, this area was designed to provide a new home for butterflies, bluebirds, and other species of birds, in addition to serving as a traffic calming device to ease motorist congestion on the busy thoroughfare.

In a few seasons, motorists should see wildflowers such as Black-Eyed Susans, Asters, Boneset, Coreopsis, and a few Milkweed species including Common, Butterfly, and Showy. RIDOT is currently exploring other areas of the state for similar ventures. ■

Showcasing Alternative Mobility

Bike/Pedestrian Pathways

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) commitment to alternative mobility transcends roads and bridges and includes bikeways, pedestrian access, transit, ferries, links to airports and commuter rail.

In implementing its commitment, RIDOT has developed an expanding greenway network to provide people with non-vehicular alternatives, while encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.

Under the direction of Governor Lincoln Almond, RIDOT has worked to create new bicycle and walking paths, building upon the popularity of the East Bay Bicycle Path that runs along the Providence River and Narragansett Bay shoreline from Providence to Bristol.

The Blackstone River Valley Bikeway, located within the historic John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor; and the Washington Secondary Bike Path, comprise Rhode Island's portion of the East Coast Greenway, a 2,500 network of bicycle and walking paths which organizers hope one day will spread from Maine to Florida.



Users of the Blackstone River Valley Bikeway pause to enjoy nature at its finest.

The former Washington Secondary Railroad is being transformed into a greenway and walking path from the Providence/Cranston line to Coventry. The 10 mile segment of this former rail line in western Coventry, known as the Trestle Trail, is currently under design by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. This segment is Rhode Island's connection to the Connecticut line.

The scenic South County Bicycle Path follows the former Narragansett Pier Railroad, beginning at Kingston Station and currently ending at Rodman Street in Peacedale. The next phase of this bikeway, currently under construction, will continue

along the former rail bed to Sprague Park in Narragansett.

Work is progressing for the Woonasquatucket River Bikeway, Rhode Island's first scenic urban bikeway. When completed, it will follow portions of the former Providence & Springfield Railroad through Providence. Bike lanes have recently been striped on Promenade Street and Providence Place (formerly Kinsley St.), the first phase of this new urban bikeway project.

Currently, close to 30 miles of independent bikeway projects have been completed and another 40 miles are under design and construction. ■



The Westerly Train Station was refurbished in 1999.

Rail

Rail is an integral component of RIDOT's overall transportation plan, as it provides an alternative mode of transportation, while at the same time improving traffic congestion and air quality.

Local commuter rail service has continued to expand through an agreement between Rhode Island and Massachusetts called the Pilgrim Partnership. An amended version of this agreement was signed in May 1998 by Rhode Island and Massachusetts Governors Lincoln Almond and Paul Cellucci, respectively.

Thanks to this agreement, nearly 2,000 Rhode Islanders enroute to Boston each day currently use commuter rail service between three stations: Providence, South Attleboro, and Attleboro. Of that, a majority of 800-900 people use the Providence Station. Overall service has increased from five to eight trips per day in 2000, and from eight to 11.5 trips per day in 2001.

Key to the success of commuter rail is the frequency of service and reliability. Over the past five years, RIDOT's commitment to rail expansion has been evident through significant infrastructure improvements that have been made, such as upgrades to the

Kingston Station in 1998 and the Westerly Train Station in 1999; the South County Commuter Rail Operations Plan that was completed in July 2001; and the ongoing Aquidneck Island Passenger Rail/Bike Path Study to help ease traffic congestion.

RIDOT is exploring the possibility for future commuter rail expansion to Wickford with a stop in Warwick to provide further options for commuters. This link is a distinctive element of the upcoming Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport. Currently in the design stage, this consolidated rental car facility with a train station, will also feature an automated people mover that will link the train station to the airport terminal at a distance of nearly 1,600 feet. The first of its kind in the country, this project is moving forward, with a groundbreaking expected in late 2002 and completion scheduled for 2004/2005.

Another upcoming rail project is the Pawtucket Layover Facility that is scheduled to begin construction in Fall 2002. As a new home for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority trains, the Pawtucket site will be a catalyst for future commuter rail growth in the area.

RIDOT is also exploring the possibility of a rail shuttle between the proposed station at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick and Providence. ■

Enhancing our Quality of Life

As a good neighbor, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is pleased to partner with the local communities for enhancement projects, non-traditional transportation projects that promote quality of life issues.



Once fully grown, these rows of Evergreen trees will help screen highway noise from Interstate 95 in Providence.

Established through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, and continued through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the program has been dedicated to funding projects geared toward historic preservation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and landscaping and beautification.

RIDOT has led the way in the overall administration of this program. Over the past several years, RIDOT has facilitated improvements for all of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns by providing these enhancement funds. The program is very competitive.

In 2002, 150 applications for enhancement projects were submitted, one-half of which were funded.

Implementation has increased over the past several years from \$975,000 in 1998 to \$6 million in 2002.

One example of a recent enhancement project is rows of Evergreen trees that were planted at Roger Williams Park Zoo adjacent to I-95 North in Providence.

The trees are designed to help screen highway noise for both the hundreds of thousands of zoo visitors, and the animals who call the zoo home.

Another success of the enhancement program is the recently restored Bull Gates at the entrance to one of Rhode Island's premiere recreational areas, Colt State Park in Bristol.



The famous bulls mark the entrance to Colt State Park in Bristol.

Also rehabilitated through this program was Moffett Mill in Lincoln. Constructed in 1812, the Mill is one of the state's first machine shops and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Moffett Mill is located on Great Road, the oldest road in the Blackstone River Valley, which has been designated a National Heritage Corridor. ■

Managing Capacity and Improving Safety

Transportation Management Center

Urban transportation in the 21st century must rely more and more on the ability to better utilize existing infrastructure rather than to build new capacity. This new environment means that we must manage our transportation system instead of simply being a builder and landlord. RIDOT's Transportation Management Center (TMC) provides such a mechanism.

The goal of the TMC is to provide information on what is happening on the state's roadways so that RIDOT can better manage capacity and improve safety by informing motorists with real-time information about congestion/incident conditions and providing alternative routes.

Clearing up incidents faster means less secondary accidents and less congestion. Understanding what is happening on our highways allows us to respond quicker to incidents and remove them.



Rush hour traffic on I-95.

To this end, RIDOT has continued to build an infrastructure of cameras, loop detectors, radar, probes, and variable message signs, to detect and inform motorists of roadway conditions.

Furthermore, RIDOT has partnered with the Rhode Island State Police to have a trooper in

the TMC so that all roadway dispatching for incidents is expeditiously performed and coordinated.

At present, the TMC has 28 surveillance cameras in a 10-mile radius around the Providence metropolitan area and plans are underway to add more cameras to the system.

The Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) permanent system has been expanded to five units. The Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) contract is scheduled to construct major truss structures designed to hold 13 overhead dynamic message boards within the next 1 ½ years.

Other systems in the Center include a national weather reporting system, a regional information exchange network, and a management reporting system. Modeling practices in other states, the TMC has also completed preliminary studies on predictive time travel with the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center. This system would utilize existing ITS equipment to better predict real-time information from one destination to the next for the motoring public, further enabling the TMC to better serve the state's motorists. ■

Synchronized Traffic Signals

Another tool in RIDOT's effort to manage its transportation system is synchronized traffic signals. Lurching from light to light destroys roadway capacity, and increases accidents and road rage.

The sprawl that has enveloped our state has lead to strip mall development with multiple driveways and lights. The consequence is the loss of capacity which often leads to unnecessary congestion.

For example, on Route 2 in Warwick, the addition of lights and driveways has caused loss of capacity that has resulted in more frustration and more accidents. Using new technologies, RIDOT hopes to better manage roads like Route 2.

Traffic signals are being installed at intersections where strict control of vehicular movement is required to optimize capacity and promote safety. Given this concept, traffic safety is RIDOT's number one priority.



Route 2 and Tollgate Road in Warwick.

RIDOT operates and maintains over 700 traffic signals on state highways. Until recently, most of the traffic signals operated independently from each other. This provided safe and efficient vehicular operations at individual intersections, but did not allow for enhanced mobility along congested corridors.

With recent improvements in traffic signal technology, RIDOT has taken the approach that traffic flow should be optimized on a system-wide basis. Individual

intersections are still designed to provide the most efficient phasing and timing patterns for localized traffic. However, where traffic signals are located in close proximity along a busy corridor, they are being coordinated to enhance traffic flow along the entire roadway.

This is accomplished by interconnecting a succession of traffic signals into a coordinated system, which is then timed to provide a more efficient progression. Remote sensing hardware is being utilized to monitor fluctuation in traffic volumes. This provides the capability to respond to changing traffic demands from a central location.

RIDOT's central location is the constantly evolving Transportation Management Center (TMC.) When fully deployed, these Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in the TMC will give RIDOT the capability to improve mobility of people and goods throughout our state.

Congestion is also commonly caused by incidents or accidents on limited access highways. Traffic delays due to congestion or lane closures often result in diversions to alternate routes.



The intersection of Park and Reservoir Avenues in Cranston.

When this occurs, highways in close proximity can become a major problem. In this regard, future deployment of ITS technology in arterial, synchronized, traffic signal systems will provide more options for drivers as they choose alternate routes to avoid an incident or accident. ■

Informing our Public

RIDOT's Community Affairs Office leads the Department's efforts as its community liaison; and RIDOT's Communications Office serves as the Department's media liaison.

Community Affairs

RIDOT's Community Affairs Office represents the "front lines" of the Department, serving as RIDOT's liaison with the public. The Office's main goal is to provide the most accurate and timely information pertaining to future plans, present status, and anticipated work schedules for upcoming projects.

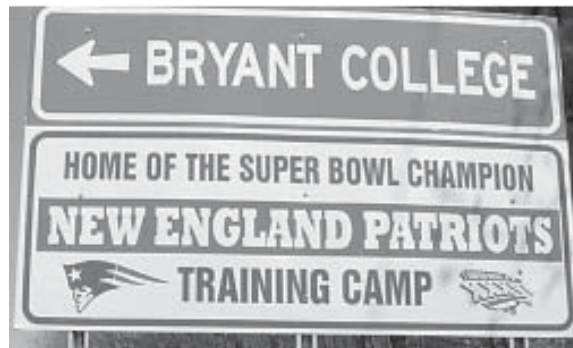
Best practices include: working one-on-one with the various community groups and businesses to better learn how to address their issues with upcoming projects; creating and placing display advertisements in local newspapers; and distributing project mailers/invitations for various pre-construction community meetings.

Along with other sections, the Community Affairs Office helps promote tourism by bringing in and hosting major conferences for the Department.

Communications

The primary role of the Office of Communications is to serve as RIDOT's media liaison. In this regard, the Office works with the media to provide the public with the most accurate information possible.

Methods of communication include: press releases; opinion pieces for the print media; and radio, phone or television interviews. The Office also handles press events that serve to better inform the public about completed or upcoming construction projects, or significant safety campaigns in which it is involved. The Communications Office also manages the content of RIDOT's website (www.dot.state.ri.us), and manages the design and development of RIDOT's quarterly newsletter, the *Transportation Digest*.



RIDOT's Sign Shop created a special sign leading the way to the summer home of the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots at Bryant College in Smithfield.

Signage

RIDOT keeps the motoring public informed through the use of proper signage. The issue, however, remains a challenge in Rhode Island since many of the signs are not customer-friendly. Too often the signs inform people who know where they are going how to get somewhere, as opposed to informing people, like tourists, who don't even know where they are, let alone how to get there.

RIDOT is working to change this by replacing signs with better information. The Department is also installing signs for popular destinations, and providing signage to direct people to intermodal connections, such as train and bus stations, ferry landings, bicycle routes, and airports.

RIDOT is aware of the problems with oversignage, however, so as a policy, it signs the major geographic areas (cities and towns), route numbers, and key streets. Federal guidelines also allow RIDOT to provide signage for a limited number of major destinations -- meaning that they generate significant traffic volumes -- in the state, such as tourist facilities, state parks, and state beaches. RIDOT also signs other state facilities, and provides specific logo signage in rural areas, directing travelers to gas, food, lodging and camping facilities. ■

Advocating for Highway Safety

Safety continues to be RIDOT's highest priority. Transportation departments throughout the country, along with the federal government, have done a good job in providing safe roads and bridges. Yet, more than 40,000 people died on our highways nationwide in 2001. In Rhode Island alone, 64 people died last year from motor vehicle fatalities.

Unfortunately, driver behavior continues to contribute to the challenges RIDOT faces on its roadways. As roads become more congested, other variables need to be considered as well, including the fact that stop signs often function, at best, as yield signs, and the fact that red lights often no longer command the attention or respect they deserve. All of these factors contribute to RIDOT's mission to provide a safe and efficient transportation system.

In 1997, RIDOT's Director Ankner created one of Rhode Island's most progressive committees, the Rhode Island Traffic Safety Coalition. Comprised of members from RIDOT, the Governor's Office on Highway Safety (GOHS), and others from the public and private sectors, the Coalition is a 100-plus member committee of individuals working together to improve highway safety.

The Coalition's efforts have helped secure the passage of crucial traffic safety legislation during the past several years including: stiffer penalties for drunk drivers; a graduated drivers license bill; a law requiring helmets for children who use bikes, scooters, and in-line skates; a secondary seat belt law that includes \$50 penalty for failing to wear a seatbelt; a child endangerment law; and an open container law.



A watermelon (right) coupled with a bike helmet (left) to deliver a safety message at Bike Safety Day.

One of most successful programs that targets children is the annual Bike Safety Day. Sponsored by GOHS, the day is designed to promote bike and helmet safety, while providing an opportunity for children to learn bike safety tips and get a helmet fitted.

Strategies for highway safety success have been marked by aggressive media campaigns featuring U.S. Olympic goalie, Sara DeCosta of Warwick, Rhode Island, and real life victims of drunk driving tragedies. DeCosta was the spokesperson for child safety seats and seat belts. Victims' stories, as told by their loved ones, helped fight for the passage of .08 blood alcohol content laws.

RIDOT also undertook a red light running study in Spring 2001. Funded with a \$100,000 donation from Amica Mutual Insurance Company, matched by a University of Rhode Island Transportation Center federal grant of \$100,000, the study shows there is a significant problem with people running red lights in Rhode Island. RIDOT is currently exploring options for helping to address this problem.

RIDOT has also advocated for standard, also known as primary, seat belt legislation since statistics show that seat belt use rates are 10-15% higher in states with standard seat belt use laws.

The good news, however, is that today, through effective education and enforcement campaigns, 71% of Rhode Islanders buckle up, marking a slight 2 percentage point difference below the national average. ■

A Publication of RIDOT's Office of Communications
Fall 2002
